

An

29  
Papered March 17<sup>th</sup>  
1825.

Inaugural Essay

on

Dysentery

By

Richard W. Fox

of Virginia

Page 100

Chapman, Guy

Chapman, Guy

Chapman, Guy

Chapman, Guy

In reflecting on the various events which have transpired in the moral government of the world, we find that to the agency of man, under the direction of providence, we stand indebted for a variety of inventions and discoveries, which have contributed to diffuse knowledge and happiness through a dark and miserable world.

In the great catalogue thus presented to our view, the discovery of medicine occupies a very conspicuous place, as production of most important consequences.

To feel and properly appreciate the advantages resulting from this discovery, belongs only to those who have entered the gloomy chamber, and beheld that morn which rose so bright overcast with untimely darkness, that goodness which captivated every heart, and vivacity which sparkled in every company, their abilities which were formed for adorning the higher stations of life, and him who had the fairest prospect of running a long course, prostrated by disease, and by the judicious administration of suitable medicines, the progress of disease arrested, and him who but a short time previous seemed



shut out from the world, raised from the bed of disease,  
restored to the embrace of tender parents and anxious  
friends, and regaining all the brilliancy of health.

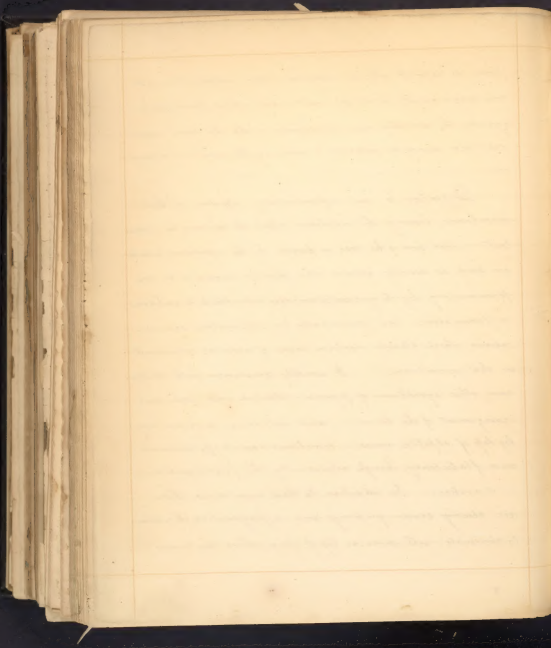
In order to illustrate the power which an early and  
judicious use of medicine has in obviating or lessening  
the baneful effects of disease, we need only select this  
very common, yet often fatal one of *Dysentery*.

Although this disease in its incipient stage is readily de-  
tected and managed without difficulty, yielding quickly  
to medicines judiciously selected, and promptly and per-  
-sistently administered, yet when by neglect or improp-  
-per treatment it has been suffered to assume a chronic  
character, or from long continuance become habitual, it is  
then more difficult to manage and more pernicious in its  
effects. frequently continuing unsubdued by the best con-  
-tention plans, the result of medical skill and mature de-  
-liberation, until the patient worn out by the disease  
sinks a victim to the impotency of our art. To prevent  
such effects it is of great importance that every practitioner  
should be well acquainted with the disease under all its



forms, so as to be able to recognise and arrest it in its commencement, especially as it is one which attacking equally the wealthy and luxurious with the poor and destitute may be expected to occur in the practice of every man.

Dysentery is an inflammatory affection of that membrane lining the intestines, called its mucous or villous coat. That such is the case is proven by the symptoms which are such as usually attend other diseases known to be inflammatory, by its yielding to remedies calculated to subdue inflammation, but principally by post-mortem examinations, which clearly discover signs of vascular congestion in that membrane. It usually commences with chills and other symptoms of pyrexia, attended with some derangement of the stomach and intestines, as evidenced by loss of appetite, nausea, sometimes vomiting, costiveness and flatulency, though occasionally the first symptom is diarrhoea. In addition to these symptoms there are always severe griping and a frequent inclination to evacuate, with more or less of fever, which continues to

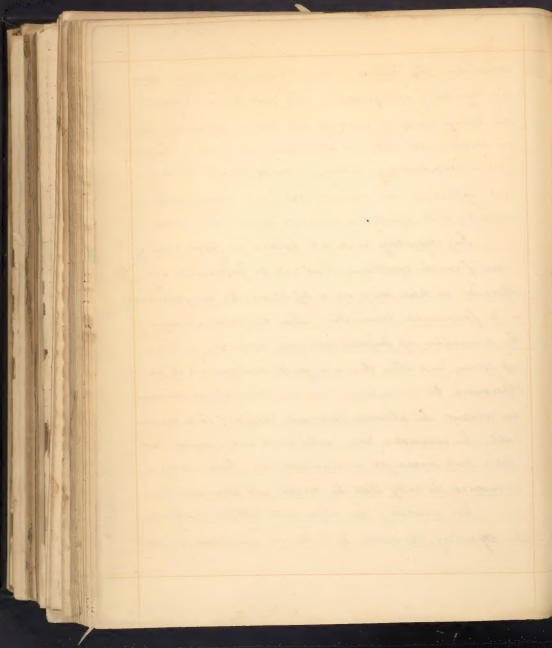




accompany the disease until it proves fatal unless arrested by timely interference. The stools though frequent are always small in quantity and consist of mucous stools or streaked with blood; at other times pure blood is discharged in considerable quantities; occasionally the natural feces appear in hard separate balls, which always produce a remission of the symptoms, especially tormina and tenesmus.

In dysentery, as in all diseases, we form our prognosis from the symptoms, which will be favourable or otherwise as these are more or less severe. We may calculate on a favourable termination when the fever is moderate the evacuations less frequent and more natural, griping less severe, and when there is a gentle and universal perspiration; On the contrary when the tormina and tenesmus are violent, the abdomen tense and painful, fever considerable, the extremities cold, pulse weak and irregular, stools filia and discharged involuntarily, we have enough to induce the belief that the disease will prove mortal.

In directing those whose death has been produced by dysentery, the nature of the disease has become evident



removing all doubt which may have existed as to its in-  
flammatory character. The mucous part of the intestine  
was universally been found affected with inflammation,  
while the secretion has been made in season. The same  
kind in the early stage of the disease is a common  
feature and to remove the acute inflammation of the  
mucous, have been found in those who are now in a more  
advanced stage.

In disease of the stomach & most easily  
conferred, the stomach, the most common affection  
with which it is attended, is inflammation and sometimes with  
vomiting, sometimes with a discharge of mucus as well  
as of digested food, sometimes with a discharge of blood,  
then in the form of pus. The affection which more  
frequently occurs is attended with the low disease is fever  
which always the most prominent and in digestion is absent  
in diarrhoea. The disease from one or combined  
causes may be relieved, which, though at least, the same  
time relieve returned in recovery or evacuation from  
the transference of the disease.







intention is to produce dysentery rather than fever, is not yet known. Dr. Leitch states is of the opinion, that when the system is equally pervaded by the action of miasmata to either disease, but more inclined to dysentery, as most likely to produce recovery, while fever is the more power of exposure to the weather &c. but the numerous cases of dysentery, which can be traced to no other than the latter cause, are very great a picture of late, somewhat as to the correctness of our opinion. These miasmata are frequent, yet they are not the only cause of dysentery. I have applied to the late perniciously malarious miasmata, if combined with moisture, is a very fruitful source of this disease it is certain. but it may be checked the miasmata, pernicious as in other words removing the malarial action of the system and but he also not overcome effects in consequence of the miasmata, which is a known fact between them. In the case of miasmata do not exist in the India country, but it is known of how common. Intemperance excessive indulgence of food, by immoderate use of alcohol, &c. &c. &c. are also the





great power of dissuading never we see in a person of  
those who indulge in the excesses of the table, making their  
pleasure in becoming a stranger to temperance -  
Dr. Parrish supposes however that sober - persons to be worth-  
less & idle. We must usually act as sober, and that  
persons may be too strongly inclined to premeditation  
of this disease.

It is time now to the consideration of the two means of treat-  
ing in which there are three indications. The first  
to subvert the inflammatory action which is accomplished  
by the secretion of pus. But when, he proceeds to  
evacuate the inflammatory secretion of the individual, and  
for this purpose we make use of direct & purgative  
medication the healthy action of the blood, which is first  
excited by the various bloodlettings & evacuations.

But it is necessary to point out the circumstances under  
which each of the foregoing remedies is pursued, and for  
that purpose I shall commence with bloodletting.

If the inflammation is not very high, manifested  
in considerable fever and pain in the abdomen, more



especially if the patient be painless, or should not manifest  
at all the property of evacuating itself, nor should we in any case  
omit performing the operation once or twice more, should the  
inflammation even seem to continue momentarily, but repeat  
the operation again or even a certain time should the  
effection in that way, or in other words so long as the  
public continues strong frequent and hard thought it  
is observed that the longer the disease has continued the  
less well generally be the necessity for evacuations of  
this kind. In support of the propriety of bloodletting  
in dysentery we have the testimony of Dr. Armstrong,  
he does not object to me to be acute, but also asserts  
in what he calls the advanced form of the disease  
he may have a vesicant venesection at once diminishes  
the force of the abdominal affection, makes the system more  
sensible of the relief of purgative and bleeding,  
and not only shortens the duration of the disease, but he  
greatly lessens the chance of chronic affections supervening  
in the many evacuations of the abdomen. He is still more  
persuaded of its beneficial effect in the acute form



the disease which, we say, occurs is dependent upon  
the first attack as it is so rapid in its progress that  
no remedy can operate so speedily in checking the in-  
flammatory action as a ressection.

Dr Johnson goes still farther in the use of bloodletting  
in dependency. In his lecture on the Influence of Topi-  
cal Bleeding, he says that in depending the blood appears  
as a sample in the circulation whether he gives it high  
or not ressection may be resorted to without the least  
impairment of vitality.

When inflammatory action  
is accompanied with much debility, if the pain continues  
obstinate, and the abdomen hard and sore, as it would  
be evidently impugned to abstract blood from the system  
generally, we have recourse to general depletion by  
Leech and Cup, aided by fomentations & cataplasms to the  
abdomen. The hemorrhage will arise under such circumstan-  
ces be both safe and useful.

If aithas been attempted to be shown. The dis-  
ease arises from Inflammation and that may, according  
~~to the~~ to the opinion of the most eminent Physicians



... in the ... are correct and the ...  
... which they make the great impression which  
is subsequently extended to the ...  
... of nothing ... than the ...  
... but ...  
...  
... of the elements  
and ...

Experience ... the ... and shows  
the propriety of the ... in therefore find them ...  
... with this view.

...  
...  
...  
...  
...  
...  
...  
The ...





with circumstances of time and locality.  
 These are the means

[illegible]

The numbers on which we chiefly depend for  
measuring the aspects of Australia are parables.

The other is the external power, if exercising the  
 imitation of nature in existence, not a dissolving external  
 action, producing glorious effusions, from their constant  
 presence. And this not perform more in this last way  
 than is imagined in the first.







It is customary with practitioners generally in the more a-  
 dult forms of the disease to remove the disease of the in-  
 flamed vessels to its source or to its outlet, and when  
 the former is the case to administer

It seems like passage of strength at San Francisco, has  
like the other two been very common - as are  
stomachic and chest cavity, I see them, and leucismus,  
and some bright some dimness of the disease

It is more convenient some degree of freedom  
in the use of the language, than a complete  
freedom, and the education must be adapted  
to the natural appearance, then it is no  
more than a degree of freedom of the  
will, which is not, but which is not  
to be taken in the sense, it is not a matter of  
fact that there should be no more of the  
matter, unless in the education, and to be aware  
to be able to do it, and to be able to do it.

As long as you are well, I am satisfied.



... it is a doubt whether such an  
purpose could be achieved in a limited time, and  
in a limited space, and it is not clear that it  
would be better in various respects, I will begin  
a most important auxiliary to the other remedies.  
I believe the institution of the ...  
and ... with some ... in ... of the  
... by which we ... the ...  
... When the institution of the ... is very  
great, producing frequent and painful ...  
... in the form of ... into ...  
... very salutary effects.

In these remedies we principally rely on the ear-  
ly stage of this disease, and which is ...  
... is accomplished ...  
they ... from the ... of ... in the ...  
... of ... in the ... the ...  
... we should not consider  
it ... beyond the ... of ...  
it is ... that the ...





of fleeing a man is always dangerous in a degree, propo-  
tioned to the time the disease has been suffered to continue.

One of our principal resources in the case of dysen-  
tery & dysentery, given as we have seen, is the specific effect  
and when the disease is long continued with an affection  
of the liver or any of the abdominal viscera it is then  
with remedy in which much confidence is placed for  
arresting the progress. The practice of treating the liver  
and its various organs, however, are with Dr. Keen  
cases of the disease. Now, it with him is with us, and  
even to the extreme stage of the disease, long continued  
it is the only recommendation and a such case, it seems  
to produce the most rapid and successful. It is common  
in the disease, however, in treating the liver  
of the liver, we must recollect that the hepatic system  
is always in motion, and that there is no organ which  
is more prone to the disease of that system than  
the liver. In all the various stages of the disease  
it is of the greatest importance that the patient be kept  
warm, in various ways, as to the choice of a diet, &c.



the season and flannel should always be worn next the skin; it is recommended by some that a flannel roller should be passed several times around the abdomen, it more effectually determines to the surface and also supports the intestines.

Though Astringents are forbidden in the early, yet they are certainly sometimes useful in the advanced stages of this disease, especially when it is kept up by a weak and relaxed state of the bowels.

In every stage of the disease the drinks should be mucilaginous and mild, calculated to defend the intestines from the acrimony of the discharge. Wine may also be advantageously employed at the same time provided it be properly diluted.

But little will remedy of any kind avail unless the strictest attention be paid to the diet of the patient, which should consist of the mildest and most easily digested articles.

These are my sentiments respecting the nature, causes & treatment of dysentery. They are the



result of impressions made on my mind by perusing  
the writings of those authors, who have treated this subject  
& to whom I have had access. I am fully aware of  
the imperfect manner in which these sentiments are  
delivered and how much the subject suffers in conse-  
-quence of not having a more able advocate. I am there-  
-fore ~~horrified~~ with the thought that it will not be subjected  
to the eyes of criticism, but of those who, I am confi-  
-dent, will be willing to make every reasonable allow-  
-ance

